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Moses downwards, tells of stiff-necked rebellion, of fatal incapacity for obedience. Theirs was a granitic temperament, fetched from volcanic depths; and it issued from the hottest fire of persecution, more intractable and adamantine than before.

We cannot conclude without extracting the passages referring to the intellectual characteristics of the Hebrews.

We must not altogether pass by their intellectual exertions during the Middle Ages. They rivalled the schoolmen in metaphysics; they surpassed all but the Arabs in science. Without believing that twelve thousand students filled the Jewish schools at Toledo, it seems highly probable that the Jews of that city in the thirteenth century could boast of more astronomers than were to be found in the rest of Europe; and the astronomical tables which they compiled for Alfonso prove that these studies were not mere astrological daydreams. Medicine was their other favorite pursuit. The Jews of Spain and Provence supplied physicians to all the European courts, and to not a few of the popes.

But, after all, if we would find the full outpouring of their inner spiritual life during these times of sorrow, we must seek for it in the psalmody of their synagogues. It was not till many centuries after the fall of Jerusalem that poetry or music entered into their services. A long extempore prayer, with a few ejaculatory responses, was the simple liturgy. Gradually these prayers fell into parts and proportions unconsciously established; at last sound asserted her sway, and rhymed hymns are found as early as the eighth century. The inter-weaving of Bible verses was of course an essential ingredient in these hymns, chanted often extempore by the leader of the service. At the close of the stanza, the expectant ear of the assembly was half surprised, half charmed by some passage of warning or promise given to their fathers 2,000 years ago; and the strong full key-note summed and blended into one the varying emotions of the verse—pity and exultation, devotion and sullen hate.

These poems are full of sublime pictures of outward nature which recall, and that not by mere plagiarism, Isaiah, Job, and David. No Christian poet could ever realize, as the Jew realized, the beauty and terror of nature to be the visible manifestation of the power of God—

"To Him sing the lips of all creatures.  
From above and from beneath has His glory sounded.  
The earth cries, There is none but Thee;  
And the heavens, That Thou alone art Holy!  
Majesty issues from the deep, and harmony from the stars;  
The day sends forth speech, and the night singing;  
The fire declares His name; the woods utter melody;  
The wild beasts tell of the exceeding greatness of God."

These poems are full also of what so strongly marks Jewish poetry from the poetry of other ancient nations—of the personal experiences, struggles, and aspirations of the soul.

Of more public and stirring themes there was no want. If a few simple tales of his heroic houses were enough for the Athenian dramatist, the Hebrew poet dealt with a tale of more absorbing interest—with the ever-present facts of his own national destiny. Poetry for the Jews was no spectacle, no amusement of the fancy, no splendid structure of the imagination; it was the simple outburst of national hope and passion. The compass of their tones ranged from transcendental reverence to fiendish hate. They sang of the certain doom of the oppressor, and it lightened the miseries of time, to know that their revenge would be co-equal with eternity. They sang of aged teachers of the law, who had sealed a holy life and saved it from the "defiling waters" by a self-offered sacrifice. They sang of mothers who had slain their children—of children, "young rose-blossoms chosen by the Lord from his garden," who had prayed for death, lest they should be tempted to betray their faith; and this time they sang joyfully, for every life thus shed, stored up forgiveness for themselves, and vengeance for their foes. They sang the sublime unity of their God and the wonders that He had done for them; for they knew themselves the centre of the universe, the one spot in God's lost creation where He had deigned to set His foot; children in a strange unholy land, for whom their Father feared the poisonous air of friendship and prosperity; driven hither and thither, but floating in the sole ark of God, on the gloomy sea of the Dark Ages.

#### BOOK NOTICES.

SPECIMENS OF DOUGLAS JERROLD'S WIT; together with Selections, chiefly from his contributions to Journals, intended to illustrate his opinions. Arranged by his son, *Blanchard Jerrold*. Boston: Ticknor & Fields. 1858. *Author's edition.*

The son has made "a very incomplete collection of the witticisms, which, for twenty years, have been coupled with the name of Douglas Jerrold." He opines that twenty such volumes as the present might be made, had nothing been lost. Perhaps, then, it were not unjust to consider what is saved at least a fair average of his wit. We are aware that wit loses much, disconnected from the time, place, and circumstances of its origin; and to this account we charge that there is no larger a proportion of admirable things in the book in hand. If nothing had been repeated, and the poorer specimens omitted, the volumes might have been reduced considerably, and made better thereby. However, as in the world at large, the sterling minority must uphold the mass. Jerrold's wit was not always caustic; it was sometimes of that milder and better kind, which turns observation into philosophy. When, too, it ceased to be intellectual solely and become sentimental, it rarely became dawdling. As for example—

"Gratis! It is the voice of nature, speaking from the fullness of her large heart. The word is written all over the blue heaven; the health-giving air whispers it about us; it rides the sunbeam; the lark thrills it high up in its skyey dome; the little wayside flower breathes gratis from its pinky mouth; the bright brook murmurs it; it is written in the harvest moon. And yet, how rarely do we seize the happiness, because, forsooth, it is a joy gratis."

Again—

"The penny, the ill-spared penny—for it would buy a wheaten roll—the poor housewife pays for a root of primrose, is her offering to the hopeful loveliness of Nature; is her testimony of the soul, struggling with the blighting, crushing circumstance of sordid earth, and sometimes yearning towards the earth's sweetest aspects. Amidst the violence, the coarseness and the suffering that may surround and defile the wretched, there must be moments when the heart escapes, craving for the innocent and lovely; when the soul makes for itself, even of a flower, a comfort and a refuge."

Then in this wise—

"Eloquently doth a dead tree preach to the heart of man; touching its appeal from the myriad forms of life bursting about it! Yea, the dead oak of a wood, for a time, gives wholesome check to the heart; expanding and dancing to the vitality around. In its calm aspect, its motionless look, it works the soul to solemn thought, lifting it upwards from the earth."

Or thus—

"I never see an Italian image merchant with his Graces, and Venuses, and Apollos, at sixpence a head, that I do not spiritually touch my hat to him. It is he who has carried refinement into the poor man's house; it is he, who has accustomed the eyes of the multitude to the harmonious forms of beauty."

The mere ghost of a pun sometimes leads him into it.

"No accounting for taste! It was never meant to be accounted for; else there's a lot of us would have good a deal to answer about. Taste, in some things, was given us to do what we like with; but now and then we do certainly ill-use the privilege."

Then we have it of this sort—

"There is a physiognomy in houses. Sure I am, I have seen houses with a swaggering, hat-a-cock sort of look; while other habitations seemed to squint and leer wickedly from the corners of their windows."

Jerrold's repartees were bright ones; but they too often slipped to the tongue without going through the head first. They were said for their own sake, and it is not right to wound, if we cannot heal afterwards.